

**DUNLOP****90****THE WORLD'S  
MASTER TYRES**

C.F.H.

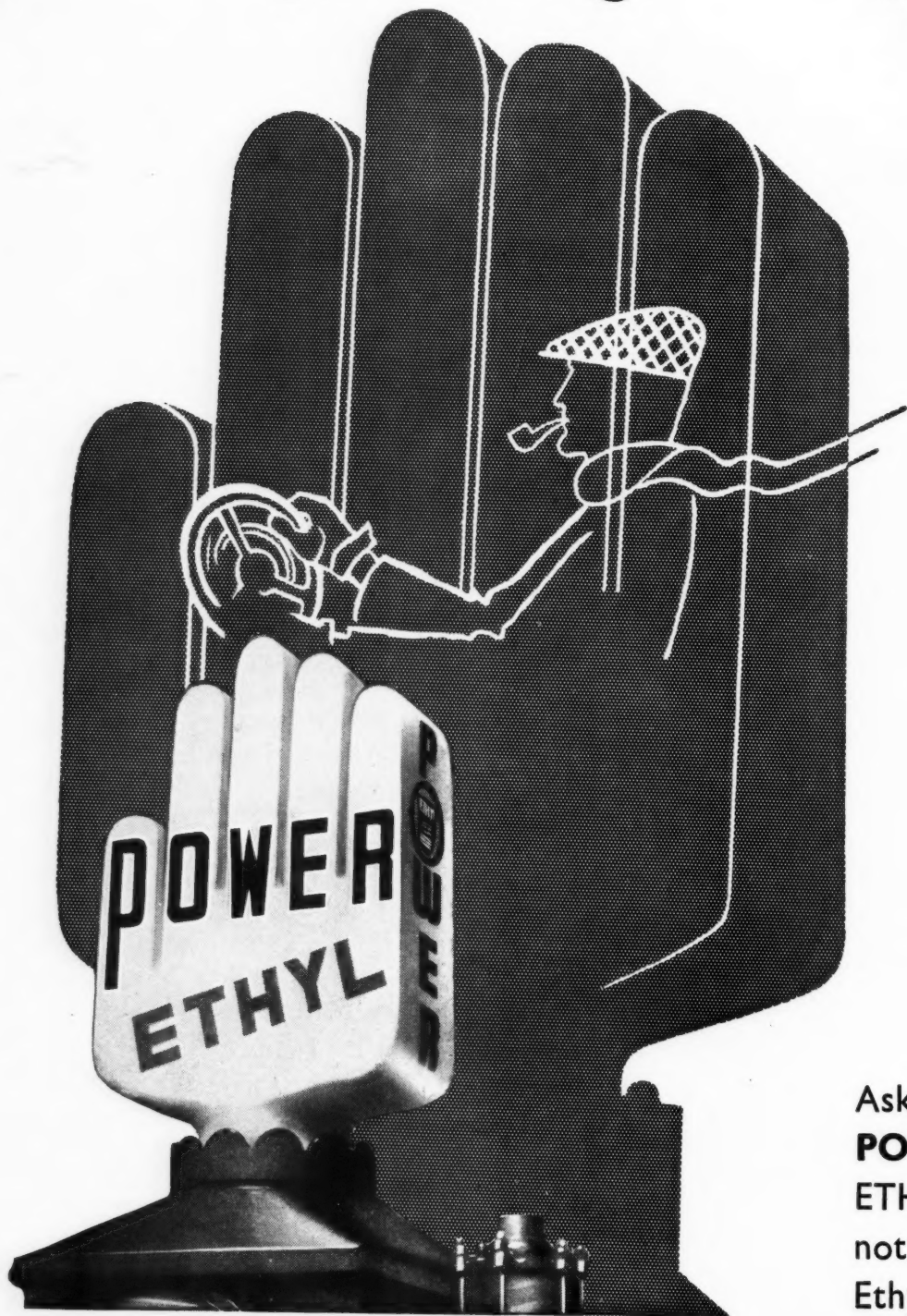
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## Charivaria.



A CRICKETER has just retired from active participation in the game owing to increasing weight. We understand that he is shaping very well as an umpire.

★ ★ ★

In view of the strong support for the French Premier in the quarter of Paris favoured by the intelligentsia (where he himself lived as a private citizen), it has, we under-

stand, been rechristened Blumsbury.

★ ★ ★

"What has happened to the old-fashioned penny dreadful?" is a current inquiry. The answer would seem to be that it now costs seven-and-sixpence.

★ ★ ★

A new type of telephone which will leave the hands entirely free is being discussed. In Whitechapel this will doubtless be welcomed with both hands.

★ ★ ★

A man complained in court that the occupant of the flat below played the trombone in bed. It was the instrument bumping against the ceiling on the low notes that annoyed him most.

★ ★ ★

It is stated that unravelling knots and tangles in the darkness is an excellent cure for insomnia. Ask any camper.

★ ★ ★

"When you come to think of it," remarks a writer, "buttons are annoying things." It is only fat men in comic drawings who are able to laugh them off.

★ ★ ★

A doctor tells us that he always eats an apple just before going to bed. He finds it keeps the patients away at night.

★ ★ ★

It is said of a circus giant that the palms of his hands measure seven inches across. It is denied, however, that the B.B.C. have offered him a season-ticket for their vaudeville programmes.



A novelist confesses that there are times when he cannot find words to express his feelings about the seashore. The remedy is of course to wear beach-shoes.

★ ★ ★

In America recently a revue was simultaneously produced in two theatres. Of course there wasn't anything else to be done if *all* the authors insisted on being in the house.

★ ★ ★

A man is stated to have written his will on a biscuit. We suppose that after the lawyers have had their share the legatees will get a few crumbs.

★ ★ ★

"Can you suggest a safe place in which to store a small quantity of petrol?" asks a correspondent. Why not try an automatic-lighter?

★ ★ ★

The conductor of a well-known English dance-band announces that he is leaving for Hollywood shortly to act as a "confidential composer." Can this mean that some of those diaries are going to be set to music?

★ ★ ★

A large area of waste ground near London has been chosen as the site of a new film-studio. So rubbish may still be shot there.

★ ★ ★

"The man who is content to go round and round in circles seldom has anything to show for it," observes a writer. Merry-go-round attendants occur to us as a possible exception.

★ ★ ★

To celebrate the centenary next year of the death of the Russian poet PUSHKIN, eight million copies of his works are to be published. Soviet book-sellers are preparing for a "Push Pushkin" campaign.

★ ★ ★

A lawyer claims to have noticed a curious species of shark while gazing into the sea on the Cornish coast recently. What the shark claims to have noticed is not recorded.





### Pollack and Goats.

UP till a day or two ago I cannot pretend to have given any very close attention to pollack and goats. Pollack is a sea-fish allied to the cod and does not at first glance appear to offer much scope to the contemplative mind. As for goats—well, there are those who like to let their thoughts dwell upon goats, and there are those of an opposite persuasion. I don't see that it is necessary to go deeper into the question than that. But since my friend Thompson wrote to say that goat's beard is now the standard bait for off-shore pollack-fishing, all this is changed. One realises there is more in pollack and goats than meets the eye.

The accepted bait for pollack used, it appears, to be a strip of mackerel or a nice red rubber sand-eel. For years men were content to cast these offerings on the waters, asking for nothing better. For if, they reasoned, the pollack don't care for our strips of mackerel, we can try them with rubber sand-eels; and when the sand-eels fail to give satisfaction, why then we've always got the strips of mackerel to fall back upon. So they angled away quite happily, drawing out their modest quota of fishes. Then, not very long ago, there appeared—at Ballycotton, Co. Cork, whence my friend Thompson has just returned—a perfect phenomenon among pollack-fishermen. While others stood on the rocks fruitlessly lashing the waves with mackerel and eels, this man was quietly collecting a stupendous bag. He simply wallowed in pollack. Naturally enough they asked him how he did it. "Is it with mackerel?" they asked. No. "Sand-eels then?" they cried. He laughed sand-eels to scorn. Finally he confessed that he was using a wisp of goat's beard tied to his hook, and the secret was out.

The results of this disclosure, Thompson tells me, have been remarkable. Anglers have enjoyed rare sport, but the peace of mind of the pollack and still more of the goats of Ballycotton has been shattered beyond repair. During the close season of course the goats are unmolested, and by about April have grown fine long beards. Then their troubles begin. Strange men creep, scissors in hand, along the hedges, waiting their chance to spring; and by the middle of the pollacking season practically every goat in the Ballycotton district is clean-shaven. What it means to a goat to find himself deprived at a single snip of the beard he has cherished so faithfully and so long, only a goat can tell. And what of their owners? Thompson is silent on this point, so I can only say that if I were a Ballycotton goat-fancier (what a whimsy!) I should resent most bitterly the debarbering of my flock.

But would the local anglers care? Not they.

"Shure an' it's a sstrand of goat's beard I'm after needin' this mornin'," says Pat Malony, speaking with a strong Irish accent.

"Divil a bit of goat's beard ye'll find in the whole of Ballycotton, if I die this minit," replies Donovan O'Connell, offering him a red rubber sand-eel instead.

"Isn't it Mike O'Rooney then," says Pat Malony indignantly, "that has the greatest ould goat in Oireland an' it tied up in the wash'us with a beard upon it the loike of BERNARD SHAW himself, an' nothin' to do but take it for the askin', only bustin' the ould iron contraption on the door," he says.

"The Lord have mercy on our souls!" says Donovan (I don't know why, but this is Ireland), and off the two of them go and shave Mike O'Rooney's goat with as little compunction as if they were shaving Mike O'Rooney himself, the Lord save him. At least that is how I see it.

Apart from such considerations as these there are one or two questions of academic interest which seem to arise from this Ballycotton business.

In the first place, why do pollack like goat's beard?

I have given a good deal of thought to this question, without arriving at any satisfactory solution. Assuming that the beard is fished wet—and I cannot believe that one fishes dry for pollack—one has to ask oneself what it looks like under water. One must look at it, you see, from the pollack's point of view. Those of my readers who keep goats may like to experiment for themselves by taking a wisp of beard (or even a whole goat) into the bath-room and plunging with it below the surface. Salt, of course, should be added to the water to make the test quite convincing. But those who, like myself, live far from goats must be content to theorise, and the only guess I can hazard is that possibly a wisp of wet goat's beard seen through water has exactly the appearance of some kind of floating seaweed upon which the pollack habitually feeds. It may be objected that pollack do not eat seaweed. In that case of course my theory falls to the ground.

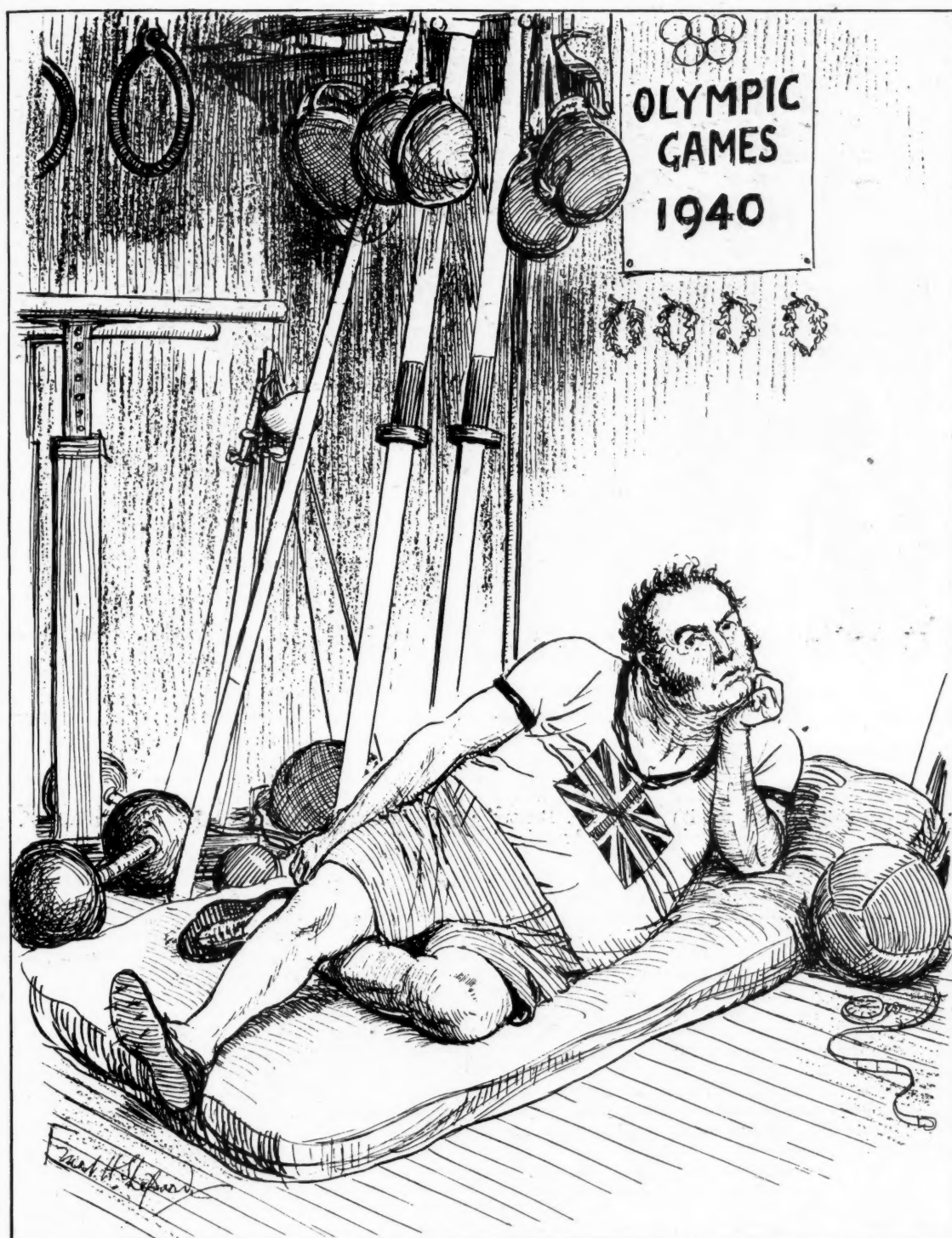
My second problem is, how was it discovered that pollack like goat's beard?

Surely not simply by experiment? I can understand a man, after hours of unsuccessful fishing with the conventional baits, being driven in desperation to try anything he happened to have about his person; but how unlikely that a fragment of goat's beard would be included in the list. I never heard even of a sufferer from rheumatism carrying such a thing in his pockets. Could the secret have been discovered then by observation? Is it possible that some old goat wandering up to its armpits into the sea was one day observed by a keen angler from the shore to have its beard snapped clean off by an enormous pollack? Or even by a swarm of pollack? The theory is attractive, but I don't think it will do. I doubt very much whether goats are given to paddling—even in South America, where, Thompson tells me, the trick was discovered. On the whole I am inclined to think that the discovery must have been pure accident. Possibly it happened something like this. An angler is busy fishing somewhere on the coast of Chile or Peru, unaware that a large South American goat has come up close behind him to watch. In swinging back his line the man momentarily catches the hook in this animal's beard, dislodging the sand-eel and gathering up in its stead a few strands of whisker. Not realising what has happened, he completes the cast and instantly hooks a twenty-pound pollack. Imagine his surprise when on removing the hook he finds only a tuft of hair adhering to it. Bewildered, he turns round just in time to see the goat quietly disposing of his rubber sand-eel. In a spirit of mild inquiry he makes another cast and is immediately rewarded with a second fine pollack. The rest follows automatically. Scissors in hand he begins patiently to stalk that goat.

Finally we come to a question of a more practical nature, viz., will the supply of the new bait equal the demand? To this, not knowing the number of pollack-fishermen in Great Britain, I can make no reply. But obviously there is a possibility of better days ahead for farmers with the intensive breeding of long-bearded goats as a profitable side-line. Meanwhile there is a *prima-facie* case for experiment with the human beard as an emergency substitute. Should it be found to answer equally well, need I add that ten thousand barbers are at this moment being trained in Russia to carry out a general de-whiskering of Comrades in the new year. Is there no one in this country with the courage and initiative to buy up as a speculation the entire crop of next year's Soviet chin-clippings? Or has Britain really gone soft?

H. F. E.





### TILL TOKYO.

JOHN BULL. "AND NOW I SUPPOSE I CAN GO TO SLEEP FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS."



"THEN I CAN SAFELY TELL OUR READERS THAT YOU ARE FOND OF DOGS."

### Modernity Amongst the Muses.

I HAVE just been reading all over again that celebrated interview with Mr. IRVING BERLIN which crops up in the newspapers about once a year. The reader will probably remember it. Mr. BERLIN is the man who wrote "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and thereby lifted music from the realm of a rather impoverished and down-at-heel art to being one of the major industries of our time. Mr. BERLIN is becomingly modest. He does not claim to have invented "rhythm." "The rhythm was in the air," he says, "and I just crystallised it." The modesty of that! So might the scientist who has just produced a flawless diamond from charcoal say casually, "The diamond was there in the carbon and I just crystallised it." But it is not Mr. BERLIN's modesty which makes this interview so fascinating to me. Nor is it the oft-repeated statement that Mr. BERLIN earns £100,000 a year. That was only to be expected. He writes music for films and one seldom hears of anyone connected with the film industry earning less.

No, the interest to me lies in the artist's approach to his art, his methods of work and his own estimate of it. For example—

(1) Mr. BERLIN can neither write nor read music. "I am a composer," he says, "not a musician. When I have worked out a tune, an arranger, who gets 400 dollars a week, takes it down on paper. Why should that be strange?"

The only possible reply seems to be that it isn't strange. It's a very logical arrangement. The strange thing is that these old-fashioned chaps never grasped the modern principle of delegating routine work and would mess about trying to be musicians and arrangers as well instead of just being composers. Usually, as the result of all this tedious copying out, they went blind.

(2) In writing songs Mr. BERLIN sometimes gets the words first and fits the music to them, or gets the music first and fits the words to it. "Occasionally," he adds, "I get both words and music together. 'Top Hat' was like that. I got the idea from a fashion-magazine for men." This again seems an advance. It makes the whole thing

so delightfully flexible. Of course it calls for a certain amount of common-sense about shape if you are going to do the tune first. Imagine SCHUBERT or SCHUMANN writing the music of, say, "Erl König" or "Belshazzar's Feast," and then starting to look round for a lyric to fit *that*! The interesting thing here however is this business about "getting both together." Mr. BERLIN is tantalisingly vague. Apparently "Top Hat" sprang completely to view from the pages of a fashion-magazine for men. The idea—yes. The words—yes. But the *music*. I suppose the whole thing was a sort of tone poem. Mr. BERLIN looked at the magazine and it just came, in the way these things do when the artist's emotions are deeply stirred.

(3) The actual description of Mr. BERLIN at work I find a little puzzling. "He works out his tunes," we are told, "on a primitive piano with three fingers. It has a sliding keyboard so that he can alter the pitch." Why *three* fingers? We are specifically told that Mr. BERLIN does not do anything about harmonisation or arrangement. The 400-dollar-a-week musician does that. Surely if you are just a composer,

only one finger would be called for? And why a "primitive piano"? If it has a "sliding keyboard" so that he can alter the pitch it doesn't sound very primitive. In fact it sounds distinctly advanced. I suppose the piano has to be primitive in order to give the right touch of atavism to the melody. The object of the sliding keyboard I cannot guess without being told how far it slides. If it slides considerable distances, presumably the object is to save Mr. BERLIN the trouble of poking a lot of tiresome sharps and flats, just as a clarinet-player changes from a B-flat instrument to one in A. If, on the other hand, the alteration in pitch is simply from "Continental" to "Old Philharmonic," I can only suppose that Mr. BERLIN, realising that his melody will usually be played or crooned slightly out of tune, wishes to know how it will sound like that.

But it is when Mr. BERLIN really goes thoughtful, philosophical and a trifle wistful about it all that he is most attractive, viz.—

(4) Mr. BERLIN is puzzled as to whether he would have been a better composer if he had had a musical education. "Some of my friends," he says, "think that it would have ruined me. Knowing nothing of musical form might have been an advantage." With all due respect, surely there is no problem here. Some

of Mr. BERLIN's friends are unquestionably right. Ten to one, if he had had a musical education, he wouldn't have been a composer at all. He would just have been a musician. He has an example on his own staff of how far that gets you. Four hundred bucks a week, and that's the limit. And mark you there have been plenty who've not even done as well as that. There was a man named LEOPOLD MOZART who thought a composer needed a musical education and gave his son one. And what was the result? The son writes home to his father about his job and says: "The two valets in attendance, the controller, the Court quartermaster, the confectioners, two cooks, and my littleness dine together. The two valets sit at the head of the table, and I have the honour to be placed above the cooks."

That's where a musical education gets a composer, Mr. BERLIN. And, finally—

(5) There is the *cri du cœur* which every artist will recognise. "Looking back," says Mr. BERLIN, "I can see that a lot of the stuff was raw. Why, in the lyrics I often didn't know when to use 'who' or 'whom.' But that old stuff, ragged as it is, had something which isn't in me now. I couldn't write it now because I have an idea what is bad and what is good." Mr. BERLIN should not worry. We have all had that feeling. The old stuff we

used to write was raw, but it had the divine spark. Whilst nowadays that spark tends to be extinguished beneath the polished veneer of "who's" and "whom's" dropping slickly into their correct places. I have found the same in my own work.

Contrast my early lyric beginning—

"Oh, baby,

You sure are great to gently make love to

I don't mean may be  
I don't know to who to turn  
Because I burn  
For you"

with my later effort—

"Underneath the moon  
In June I croon this tune  
Because I love you.  
Underneath the stars  
I sing these bars  
Because I'm blue."

Can anyone suggest that the first, despite a certain shakiness of syntax, has not a life of its own which is worth far more than the suave polish of the second? But it is inevitable. One moves on. And maybe, after all, future generations will find that the mellowness of the tunes Mr. BERLIN hummed to his arranger in old age more than compensates for the lost youthful ruggedness of "Alexander's Ragtime Band," written before all this preoccupation with artistic values began to stultify his work.



"NAH THEN, DRAKE."



## The Bogchester Chronicles.

### A Day with the Territorials.

"ALT! 'Oo goes there?"

"Friends of your commanding officer."

"Well, 'e's in a rare temper; they give 'im a bad egg for 'is breakfast."

The military challenge shows us that we are approaching the front line. Colonel Tallboy and the Territorials of the East Clumpshires are engaged in a struggle with their traditional enemies the Clumphampton Rifles over ground already well known to these well-matched adversaries on Mrs. Gloop's estate. As usual the Rifles have chosen the "Gamecock Inn," on the edge of the moors, as their headquarters. And, as usual, Colonel Tallboy has selected this commanding promontory which, besides being unequalled from the military point of view, is within easy reach of Bogge Hall, where he is accustomed to dine when the battle is over.

We arrive to find that a hot engagement is already taking place. A couple of bicycles, representing four batteries of field-guns, are concealed in the bracken, and under their concentrated fire, Colonel Tallboy tells us, the "Gamecock Inn" has undoubtedly been razed to the ground. He has just made his customary signal to the opposing forces to point out that their position is no longer tenable, but he is much displeased with the reply he has received. Major Pilkington, at present in command of the Rifles, has signalled back to say that his troops have taken refuge in



"THE MILITARY CHALLENGE SHOWS US WE ARE APPROACHING THE FRONT LINE."

the imaginary dug-outs which he has constructed round the "Gamecock Inn" and that so far the only casualties are the prisoners taken earlier in the day.

### IGNORANCE AND OBSTINACY.

This is Major Pilkington's first year in command and, as Colonel Tallboy remarks, he does not seem to have made himself acquainted with the rules. However, there is nothing to be done until an umpire arrives. In the meantime Colonel Tallboy signals that the bombardment is being intensified with dug-out-piercing shells and Major Pilkington replies that the dug-outs are being further protected with imaginary sand-bags.

"Pshaw!" cries Colonel Tallboy indignantly. "Obviously the man is no soldier."

He then proceeds to give an outline of the military situation, to which Sir George and I listen with the closest attention. But Mrs. Gloop interrupts him. She is more interested to hear news of her nephew, young Freddie Wardle, who has just joined the Territorials. "Such a high-spirited boy," she says warmly; "I am sure you must all be so fond of him."

"Yes," says the Colonel. "Oh, yes, of course." He then tells us that Freddie Wardle has been sent off with a platoon to establish an advanced signal post preparatory to the



"'BUT WHERE ARE THE ENEMY?' ASKS COLONEL TALLBOY IN SOME PERPLEXITY."

Colonel's well-known outflanking movement. It is obviously a task of some responsibility.

"The lad must be doing well for himself," says Sir George.

"Yes," says the Colonel without any marked enthusiasm. "And besides we always like to send him off by himself if we can. He is so very high-spirited."

### A BRUSH WITH THE ENEMY.

Peering down into the valley we can now see Freddie Wardle crawling through the bracken with his platoon towards his objective. Every now and then he lets out loud hunting noises and turns to wave his cap at battalion headquarters. "Severe casualties from twin-engined horse-flies, Sir," he bellows back up the slope. It seems that he is a very high-spirited officer indeed.

"But why are they having to crawl through the bracken?" asks Mrs. Gloop indignantly.

"We had hoped," says the Colonel bitterly, "that the manoeuvre would not be noticed by the enemy."

This hope, however, is not to be realised, for at that moment a burst of heavy firing comes from Freddie Wardle's platoon. Apparently a counter-attack has been launched and an umpire can be seen galloping down to assess the casualties.

As yet none of the enemy is visible. From where we are it looks as though the platoon had surrounded a small patch of heather and had concentrated their fire into the middle of it. It seems unlikely that the enemy can be entrenched there in any numbers; indeed after the first volley the firing stops and the platoon advances with a loud cheer. But we still receive no report, and it looks as though

every member of the platoon has been declared a casualty. Colonel Tallboy sends down a corporal carrying a flag which represents a company of infantry as reinforcements and descends with his staff to investigate.

#### UNSOLDIERLIKE CONDUCT.

We follow him down to the scene of this first brush with the enemy and arrive in time to hear Freddie Wardle making his report.

"It was a glorious victory, Sir," he shouts. "Terrible casualties. No quarter asked or given."

"But where are the enemy?" asks Colonel Tallboy in some perplexity.

"Here, Sir," cries Freddie Wardle, waving a dead grouse by the tail-feathers. "We surrounded a covey of Auntie's grouse, cut them off from their base and discharged a withering volley of sand and stones out of the rifles. Two casualties have already been reported; the rest have been given the fright of their lives and are in full retreat."

"Mr. Wardle!" cries the outraged Colonel, "is this the way you behave on active service? If I have any more of this conduct you will be placed under arrest."

"And, Freddie," breaks in Mrs. Gloop sharply, "I also shall have something to say to you when the manoeuvres are over."

"Oh, no, you can't Auntie," cries Freddie Wardle in alarm. "I shall be under arrest by then, shan't I, Sir?" But the Colonel has already turned away and we leave a dejected officer to continue his crawl through the bracken.

#### LAYING THE TRAP.

It seems likely that the valuable element of surprise has now been lost. Nevertheless the action is proceeding satisfactorily. The main body of the Clumphantown Rifles can now be seen advancing down the hill-side in front of the "Gamecock Inn." Our own main body is working up the valley to deliver an attack on their left flank, and news comes that reinforcements are on their way from the First East Clumpshires stationed on our left. It is the Colonel's intention to fling them against the right flank of the enemy, who are thus walking into a carefully-laid trap.

But now, as is so often the case in military campaigns, the unexpected happens. Away in the distance, down the road along which our reinforcements are expected, a funeral procession suddenly appears over the crest of the hill. It is moving at a snail's pace, completely blocking the road, and it is clear that our reinforcements will never get through in time. Colonel Tallboy bites his moustache in irritation. This entirely unpredictable factor may completely upset our plans. He sends a runner to tell the First East Clumpshires to leave the road and strike inland across the Stagnant Percy Marshes.

Time shows that this is a wise decision. As the funeral cortège comes completely into view it is seen to be of enormous length and quite impassable for any body of troops. There is a good deal of speculation among us as to whose funeral it can possibly be and what its destination is.

#### A DEPLORABLE TRICK.

We are not long left in doubt. Suddenly the hearse breaks into a hand-gallop and the long convoy of cabs behind comes thundering along in a dense cloud of dust. For a moment we are dumbfounded by the spectacle and then Colonel Tallboy awakes to the situation.

He calls to his bugler to sound the retreat, blows his whistle and waves frantically to the company commanders to rally their men at battalion headquarters. But it is too late. The funeral thunders down the road to the foot of

the hill and now every cab is disgorging soldiery, who are casting off top hats and black frock-coats as they run forward to the attack. The Clumphantown Rifles are upon us.

It is clear that the military situation has become hopeless as a result of this despicable trick which would be scorned by anyone who took a pride in his profession. The main body of the Rifles, cheering loudly, are now attacking all along the front, while the funeral party is falling upon battalion headquarters from the rear. There is obviously nothing left for us to do but to surrender.

Nevertheless Colonel Tallboy fails to conceal his chagrin



"CAMOUFLAGE, MY DEAR SIR," SAYS MAJOR PILKINGTON IN PATRONISING TONES.

at having to surrender to so unsoldierly a figure as Major Pilkington, who now sweeps into our midst with a broad grin on his face. He is clad in black and flowing widow's weeds; his only weapon is an umbrella brandished in a large hand encased in a black cotton glove; one of his elastic-sided boots has been lost in the assault. Apart from the service cap perched on the back of his head there is little indication that this is the commanding officer of an infantry battalion.

"Camouflage, my dear Sir," he says in patronising tones. "That is the secret of modern warfare. I expect the War Office will learn a lot from to-day's manoeuvres."

For our own part we cannot believe that the War Office will approve of a victory won by such means. What, we wonder, can be the morale of a regiment whose officers behave in so unorthodox and unmilitary a manner?

H. W. M.

A chieftain returned to the kraal  
And said to his wives with a snaal:  
"My perishing impi  
Was too jolly skimpi  
To shake the N'Bongas' moraal."

"This revolutionary change was brought about by the demand of oyster merchants, who claimed that owing to the depression diminishing the purchasing capacity of their usual customers, and the fertility of the oyster, they had no outlet for their enormous socks."—*Yorkshire Paper*.

They could take their boots off.



"IT SEEMS THAT THE ONE IN PINK IS THEIR WICKET-KEEPER'S SISTER."

### No Homelike Place.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. BEVERLEY NICHOLS and "No Place Like Home.")

I NOW propose to write something quite absurdly unpleasant. It will infuriate. It will shock. It will even exacerbate. Which is why, you see, I am using these short sentences. They give an impression of Tight-Lipped Grimness. They infuriate more. They shock more. They even exacerbate more. Because, you see, I wish for the moment to be taken seriously. And this is the technique I use on such occasions.

If I did not propose to write something quite absurdly unpleasant, or Quite Absurdly Unpleasant, I should probably be tempted to write it like this. I mean Like This. And I should probably admit a little archly that "exacerbate" is one of the words I have never been Quite Sure About. For that would be true. It is. I mean, I never have. Because, you see—

*Irate Reader.* When are we coming to the point?

*Author.* Quite soon now.

*Irate Reader.* Well, how soon?

*Author.* Almost at once. I was relying on you to interrupt and save me the fatigue of working up to the subject. If you hadn't arrived I could have gone on like that for pages and pages. I mean For Pages And Pages. It isn't necessary at the moment, but if it were I could go on like this for Pages And Pages too.

*Irate Reader.* I want to hear about this unpleasant thing. Is it improper?

*Author.* Er—no. But I hoped I might be able to make you think so. Because, you see—

It is about the town of X. The town of X is on the frontier of Y. I wish that were all. But it isn't all. The town of X is also on the frontier of Z.

I think, if you don't mind, we will use those symbols. There is anonymity in them, and doubt, and a great vagueness.

*Irate Reader.* What?

*Author.* I beg your pardon. That sentence slipped out of my Purple Passage style. What I should have said was this—

There is anonymity in them. There is doubt in them. And there is a great vagueness in them.

Which is just as well. For it would not do to be too explicit. Because, you see, I might infuriate the wrong people. And that, quite definitely, I do not want to do.

*Irate Reader.* This is a very bumpy journey. Do you have to write like this all the time?

*Author.* Not at all. We now come to the Purple Passage style.

The town of X . . . It is a quite absurdly charming little town. The minute I saw it I was filled with a profound delight. "In this town," I said to myself wisely, "I shall find peace. There is charm in it, and solitude, and a great tenderness." (My sentences always have that rhythm when I am deeply moved.) But I found I had spoken too soon, for there were other things besides charm, and solitude, and tenderness, in the little town of X. There were smells in it, and sewers, and a great gasworks.

All this will doubtless infuriate many people. That can't be helped. Someone has to say these things. And I am feeling so desperately stern and grim that for two pins I would tell you the name of the town, and you would know exactly what I am being outspoken about.

I have said that X is a frontier town. And that reminds me of my second grievance.

On the Z side of the frontier there is a garden. It is the garden of a charming and gracious lady, still ravishingly beautiful at the age of 134. Very gently and sweetly she invited me to go and talk with her flowers. And, although the unabashed sentimentality of these remarks will doubtless arouse feelings of extreme nausea in the stomachs of those persons who do not know how to talk to flowers, I may as well say that I glory in it. And my agent likes as much of it as he can get.

Well, I went. We talked, the flowers and I . . . but I will not profane our conversation by recording it. The true gardener will understand.

And after that interview was over I talked with the charming lady. And I talked with her two lovely daughters, who had all the grace and attractiveness of young girls, though both were over 110. And I found that the life of the flowers in that exquisite garden was a bitter tragedy.

Over the wall, from the other side of the frontier, came a sound of raucous singing. I transcribed a few bars of it—



"It is the Y national anthem," I was told.

"Do they sing it often?"

"All the time."

I looked round me at the garden. "But all these," I cried. "All these. They are typically Z flowers. They are the national flowers of Z. Surely—surely—"

"That makes no difference. They are compelled to listen."

The raucous singing continued. And somehow, as I thought of the life of those tragic flowers, listening day after day to that unlovely voice, my eyes filled with tears. I can't help it if you dislike reading this sort of admission. I like making it. It gives me a pleasant squiggly feeling inside.

R. M.

### Our Cretinous Corner.

"There will be many people, I fancy, who will welcome an opportunity to see this film a second time—if they were unfortunate enough to miss it on its first run."—*Film Critic.*

"In an exhibition of this type the pictures must unavoidably be crowded somewhat closely together, with the result that it is difficult to 'see wood for trees.' Therefore, the pictures should be surrounded by frames which are as obtrusive as possible."—*N. Irish Paper.* So that it is difficult to see the trees for the wood.





À LA MODE



"YOU KNOW, HAROLD, IT WAS QUITE A MISTAKE TO BRING GLADYS! THE GIRL IS GETTING OUT OF HAND."

### Word-Skirmish.

"As regards," etc.:—

"M.C.C. have made the following announcement *as regards* the position of H. LARWOOD and W. VOCE:—

In the summer of 1935 both H. Larwood and W. Voce were approached by responsible officials *as regards* their attitude towards taking part in representative cricket . . .—*Times*.

The second "as regards" should surely be "as regarded," if the pompous phrase is necessary. But, in both places, why not "about" or "concerning"? Or, in the first sentence, why not "on"?

But "as regards" and "in respect of" and "as respects" and "with reference to" and "in relation to" swarm and multiply everywhere—and especially in Acts of Parliament. Nine times out of ten the same work could be done better by "about," "concerning," "on," "of" or "for." In my youth I used to study "Badger on the Law of Drains." The next edition, I suppose, will be called "Badger as regards the Law of Drains."

#### EXERCISE.

Are the following correct:—

"I am worried as regards my digestion."

"I am going to see a man in relation to a dog."

"I know nothing with reference to agriculture."

"I am excited as regards the Derby."

"I'll have a bob each way in respect of *Dogsbody*."

"Mavis, darling, I'm mad as regards you."

"Following."

"Badajoz, in East Spain, was yesterday in flames, *following* its capture by the insurgents."—*Sunday Paper*.

"She plays the part of the little English secretary, whose love of good music, *following* an unhappy ship-board romance, causes her to accept the . . . dignified advances . . ."—*Evening Paper*.

"*Following* the football dispute at the Olympic Games, the Peru Government held a scrum last night."—*Low*.

"A plot to assassinate Hitler . . . has been revealed *following* orders to the Nazi Secret-Police . . ."—*Sunday Paper*.

"Dorothy Round is returning to England, *following* the Wightman Cup."—*Daily Paper*.

(But the Cup had been left in America!)

"Miss ——— was awarded £100 damages to-day, *following* being scalded in a City tea-shop."—*Daily Paper*.

Game, set and match!

This pestilent habit increases. We journalists began it. A few stout

papers, I think, still set their faces against it, but I have found one or two naughty examples in our dear *Times*; and now it is creeping into official documents and the pronouncements of Ministers. It must stop.

Sometimes, Bobby, this "following" means no more than "after" (or some other short preposition), and then it is not merely erroneous but wordy. The man-in-a-hurry supposes that he is saving space and time; but the correct preposition would be briefer, as in—

"Following breakfast, he went to the office;"

"Following a wetting, he caught cold;"

or in these delightful pieces, guaranteed genuine by a warrior:—

"Following severe fighting the Japanese withdrew."

"The gelding had a quiet time *following* Goodwood."

"He died *following* revolver wounds."

"A man . . . snatched a bag of rings . . . and escaped, *following* a stop-thief chase."—*London Paper*.

Sometimes, Bobby, the harassed writer is at least saving space; sometimes he is worthily trying to avoid some clumsy phrase like "as a result of." But to do that it is not necessary to commit a "following." The sen-

tence can always be shaped in another way—as thus:—

“Badajoz, captured by the insurgents, was yesterday in flames.”

You want to say—

“Civil War broke out in — to-day. The Cabinet will discuss the affair to-morrow.”

It is quite unnecessary to put it thus:—

“Following the outbreak of Civil War in — the Cabinet will discuss the affair to-morrow.”

After all, Bobby—I mean, following all—in every narrative passage nearly everything follows something; and if these unattached, anæmic “followings” are to be permitted at all there is no reason why there should not be many more of them. Here is a sentence from the “Interim Report of the Mixed Committee on the Problem of Nutrition”:

“The progress made in medical science and hygiene in the second half of the nineteenth century led Governments to the realisation that great possibilities of improvement in national health were within the reach of mankind.”

We might put it this way:—

“Following the progress made, etc., etc., it was realised by Governments, etc.”

We might; but we must not. If you are tempted, Bobby, to use “following” in this kind of way, you must be sure that it is attached to a noun in the same sentence, and that, being so attached, it makes sense. Here is an example which, at first sight, one is inclined to pass:—

“At the meeting of the Assembly in September, 1935, following a request made by twelve delegations, there was a full discussion of this problem . . .”

*Interim Report of the Mixed Committee on the Problem of Nutrition.*

Here at least the “following” has a noun: but which is it? At first, one thinks, it is “the meeting of the Assembly” which follows the request; and it seems to be a good “following.” But a little reflection shows that it can’t refer to “the meeting of the Assembly;” it is distantly attached to “a full discussion.” This “following,” therefore, fails for ambiguity, and wins no marks for anything, since it is unnecessary. What is meant is “by, at, or on the request of twelve delegations.” Why not say so?

Sorry to be so long and solemn about this growth, Bobby. But it spreads, as you see, and very soon you will be told that it is “a useful and well-recognised idiom,” and therefore to be praised. It is not. It is lousy.



“WHEN I WAS A LAD, SIR, I WAS SEDUCED FROM ‘ABERDASHERY TO GROCERIES.’”

### “Very Definitely Not.”

“The position as regards defence appears to be that very definite additions are to be made as regards materiel, both in the Navy, the Army . . .”

*Letter to “The Times.”*

“There is . . . a very definite limit both to Mr. Blum’s powers and his patience, and it grows nearer every day.”

*“Times” Correspondent.*

“No discussion about any topic at all! Witness. Very definitely not.”

“May I point out that upon this aspect of the question there are two very definite and authoritative opinions?”

*Sir John Harris in “The Times.”*

And may I point out that an opinion is either “definite”\* or it is not; just as a decision is either final or

\* “Definite—Having fixed or exact limits; clearly defined, determinate, fixed, certain.”—O.E.D.

not. A very definite opinion, then, is as ridiculous as would be a very final judgment of the House of Lords, or an extremely fixed price at a sixpenny store. If things may be very definite there is no reason why they should not be slightly definite, or vaguely fixed, or a weeny bit final. Which shows that this habit, too, is very, very, extremely, positively, quite definitely bad.

### “Evacuate.”

“Three British subjects at Granada were safely evacuated by air . . .”

*B.B.C. Announcer.*

More atrocities.

A. P. H.

An Australian has travelled half-way across the world to marry a Miss Mary Smith. It seems remarkable that he could not find one nearer home.



## The Bird in the Covered-Court.

LOOKING in to see if there was any play to watch, I found it deserted. Too late in the afternoon, I guessed. It was a huge place, as a covered-court has to be to give room for the run-backs and lobs, and spectators; and, feeling strangely small and alone in it, I was leaving, when I noticed, high up, flying from one iron cross-piece to another, a bird, a moving speck of dark against the light.

Backwards and forwards it flew, in a kind of panic, from beam to beam, afraid, not of me but of its isolation, of its imprisonment in unfamiliar surroundings. When I went up to the gallery, to be nearer, I saw that the bird was a wagtail, and it must have come in from the garden through a sliding door, had forgotten the route, and was now beating against the top panes to get out, out.

How long it had been there, I had no notion; but long enough, I imagined, to be hungry as well as frightened. For wagtails have little to do with heights; they find their food as they move about the lawn in brief swift runs.

Man, it has often been said, is never so powerless as in the presence of a sick or flustered bird; and I felt this again. What could I do? The wagtail was out of reach of any net, even if one could be found or fashioned. So long as there was any light coming through the windows, it would stay up there, hoping for escape. But with the dark it might come down to the ground and find its way out, and, with the idea of helping it to this plan, I stood by the sliding door through which it had entered. Did it see me? I cannot say, and, if it saw me, did it put two and two together? I cannot say, but probably not; for birds, though they can be clever enough when their instinct remains within narrow limits, do not seem (any more than the bee that I was recently writing about) to be able to expand. At any rate, the wagtail still flitted anxiously from beam to beam. I feared to wave; but "Hi!" I cried; "this way to the grass!" If the bird heard me, it understood nothing, for it continued to beat against the glass. "Lawn, forward!" I cried; but there was no response.

And there you see again the ridiculous wide gulf that separates man, kindly man, from a wild bird. Whether there was ever a time when good relations subsisted between

them, we do not know; but this we do know, and from rich experience, that birds in cages and in aviaries can become unsuspicious, trustful and tame, as indeed they should. There are few of us who have not practised or watched interchanges of endearment between these little creatures and the Lords of Creation, whether the little creatures are canaries or bullfinches, or the increasingly popular budgerigar. But the cage must come first. In a wild state there are too many memories, or too much tradition, passed down from parents to children, of man with a gun, boy with a catapult.

The next morning I went to the covered-court again; but bird there was none.

I asked the attendant. "Oh, yes," he said, as if it were a regular, natural occurrence. "I found it on the floor. Dead. Bruised a bit about the head, but it had died, I should guess, from hunger. One of them little wagtails that can't find their own food in covered-courts."

And there I left it. Or did I? Did I not again murmur, inquiringly, something about instinct going astray?

E. V. L.



FLAT-LIFE.  
THE BIRD-BATH.

## Dirty Work at Leipzig.

I SENT my rabbit Ernest to the International Poultry and Rabbit Exhibition in Leipzig but was unable to go there myself, and for news of him I have had to depend on the *Sonderdienst* which has been so thoughtfully forwarded to me by the organisers of the affair. The penultimate issue of this broadsheet, just to hand, says nothing about Ernest; indeed, it scarcely mentions rabbits at all, the editor being apparently wrapped up in poultry.

His talk is all of booted, nonbearded, speckled Bantams, of Bronze Turkeys, of Pouter Croppers, of big-and-water Fowls and suchlike. Germans seem to worship the things, much as the Egyptians venerated cats. Why, at Cröllwitz, the acknowledged poultry-breeding institution, situated in the middle of forests, heaths and shady lakes, a proper Eden for small stock, there are forty best-adjusted fowl-houses with separate day and sleeping departments, with automatic food and drinking apparatus and warm-water heating. Since long years there are bred the best fowl breeds. Not one cock leaves this yard without a genealogical register going back generations. The ancestors of these breeding cocks are two cocks once brought over from Hollywood, and now standing in the museum. You can see where this poultry-yard gets its morals.

Not always were the Germans so avian-minded. Dirtscraper, as the editor admits, was once upon a time the name of the German producer of eggs, meat and feathers (it looks, too, as though Ernest's name is mud); fowl, ducks and geese had to gather their food out of the waste, from the fields and out of the rubbish heap. Then, after the War, there were large poultry-farms built up, in which thousands of hens and ducks have been crowded together without space, but they were there good fed and fostered. Foreign countries vied with each other, it would seem, for the honour of feeding them: the Scandinavian States sent them cod-liver oil, meatpowder came from Argentine, sardinepowder from Japan, prawns from Holland, Sojashot from China, oyster-shells and maize and more (?) from America. India seems to have been lukewarm about it all, contributing only stints.

I see now, though, that all these countries expected payment for their powder and Sojashot and more (?) and whatnot; consequently to-day



## HIGH TIDE.

"DON'T MAKE SUCH A FUSS. YOU'LL 'AVE YER PADDLE WHEN THE WATER'S DRAINED OFF."

one has other principles: Feeding with food-stuffs from the own soil. That is what comes of being mercenary. Only own foodstuffs shall be used, so the poultry now mostly subsist on German grain. Potatoes, potato-flakes and sugar chips are also demanded, but it is not clear whether they are served. Legumes and meagre milk procure the necessary protein, and in the most cases the poultry has a running place in the garden, where it can find green forage, and so on. But it repays this freedom with service: by its consuming of destructive insects and worms and by gathering weed seeds it shares also the combat of agricultural and gardening noxious. And likes it.

Well, the competition for the World Championship prizes of the International Poultry and Rabbit Exhibition has found its end, and I suppose I shall be seeing Ernest back again almost any day now already. Of 36 prizes, which were divided, Germany received 27, Holland, Switzerland and Denmark had to share the other 9. Evidently we are no good at "away" exhibitions. The battle has been

honourable, the *Sonderdienst* claims, and honourable are also the results. No doubt, no doubt. Still, 27 out of 36, eh? And not a word about Ernest . . .

You may think that I am one of those fellows who are always questioning umpires' decisions and who end up with grievances and persecution-mania, but let me quote you a passage from Professor GHIGI's trenchant speech of thanks: "*It will not be necessary to show up the results, as they were already written down in the nice book of Congress documents, which the Committee has given us already at our arrival.*" If this means anything it means that, for all the chance my rabbit ever had of participating at the prizes, I might just as well have sent him to the Olympic Games!

"Bend over the tops of onions to assist them ripening."—Gardening Note.

Not till our lumbago's better, thank you.

Latest from the Most Popular Front.

"War Declared at tea score of 219 for 3."  
From the Tape Machine.

## On Reading of "Hatlets."

I SET out from my "flatlet"  
With one idea in view,  
Which was to buy a "hatlet,"  
A neat and nifty "hatlet,"  
A chic and charming "hatlet,"  
Of fashionable hue.

I sacrificed my "plaitlet,"  
I parted with my "perm.,"  
Then fitted on a "hatlet,"  
A new distingué "hatlet,"  
A fifty-fifty "hatlet,"  
Made by a well-known firm.

I had a cosy "chatlet,"  
With "Mellisande et Cie,"  
Who told me that my "hatlet,"  
My ultra-modern "hatlet,"  
My smart ten-guinea "hatlet,"  
Was absolutely me!

But, waiting on the "matlet"—  
I got home rather late—  
I found a friend, the "catlet,"  
Who wore a kind of "vatlet,"  
And told me that my "hatlet"  
Was quite too out of date.



## HOLIDAY GOLF IN FRANCE.

"Hi, MA'M'SELLE—FORE—CURSE IT—QUATRE!!"

## All Out.

"Nicholas," I said severely to my nephew, "it is a great pleasure to have you staying with us. You are a gleam of sunshine about the house, and the sound of your sweet voice is like the singing of angels, but there's just one little point I should like to impress on you, if you won't think me rude and inhospitable."

"Of course not," said Nicholas demurely.

"It's just this," I said with that biting and peculiarly elaborate sarcasm that makes me so much feared and respected. "You are perfectly at liberty to ruin my razor, wear my clothes, sit in my favourite chair, smoke my expensive tobacco, take my wireless set to pieces, break my tennis-racquet, sleep in my bed . . ."

"Thank you, Uncle."

"But," I concluded in a tremendous voice, "I shall be much obliged if you will allow me the occasional use of my car. Last night I had a meeting over at Nether Drooping, and when I went to the garage I found the car missing. I was informed that you had borrowed it to take some girl for a ride. I had

to walk from Nether Drooping. Six miles."

"Good for your figure," suggested Nicholas.

"It was pouring with rain."

"I expect it freshened you up no end," he said; "smoking and drinking as you do all the time; a nice long walk in the fresh rain was just what you needed. I've probably saved you a hefty doctor's bill. Which reminds me, can you lend me ten bob?"

I was so shaken by the boy's colossal nerve that I handed over the note before I knew what I was doing. He filled his pockets with my cigarettes and departed.

Presently I heard a noise out in the yard that seemed familiar. It sounded like the engine of the car running . . . it was either that or a drunken Irishman digging potatoes with a road-drill suffering from bronchitis. Nothing else on earth could quite match the noise made by my '27 Mostyn-Moan. I went to the window and looked out, and my worst suspicions were confirmed. There was my beautiful chariot, shaking its sides with laughter, while Nicholas carefully arranged a number of cushions.

My first impulse was to rush out and

demand haughtily that he should put the car back in the garage, but when I reached the yard Nicholas was no longer there, and a more cunning scheme came into my head. Acting with lightning-like rapidity I emptied the petrol from the tank, leaving only enough to take him, I reckoned, about three miles. Our village is so placed on the map that if we go three miles in any direction we are still at least three miles from anywhere else. It was pleasant to think that Nicholas would have to walk three miles to a garage to get petrol. It would give him time to ruminate on the duty and respect due to uncles.

Then I returned to the house in search of Edith. More than once Edith has told me that I ought to take a firmer line with young Nicholas, and I was anxious to tell her that for once I had put my foot down. I looked for her in the kitchen and in the bedroom and in the study, but nowhere could she be found. In the front porch, however, I found young Nicholas.

"Are you looking for Aunt Edith?" he said. "She's gone over to Nether Drooping in the car . . . seemed in a devilish bad temper, so I started it up for her and put in some cushions."





### THE CASE FOR INTERVENTION.

BELLONA. "WHY DO THEY HANG BACK WHEN HERE IS MY CHANCE TO SET THE WHOLE OF EUROPE ABLAZE?"



## Mr. Silvertop—Numismatist.

Mr. Silvertop hovered sceptically over the flint battle-axe which an eagle-eyed milkman had found in my garden.

"I suppose you're not a-going to 'ave it made up into a tie-pin?" he asked.

"I'm going to give it to a friend who collects them," I told him.

"E's welcome to it. 'Ow anyone ever sets out in the first place to 'oard flint battle-axes 'as me fair beat. If you could tell for certain, now, that it was with this 'ere that Queen Bawdiseer done in one of 'er 'usbands, there'd be some sense in it—morbid, may be, but there'd be some 'uman interest about it, 'owever long ago it was she sloshed 'im. But looked at one way them collectors aren't reely 'uman. When I wakes up in the night sometimes and tells myself the world's full of blokes 'oose only 'ope of 'appiness this side of 'eaven is to grub up some ruddy fossil or one of them 'orrid little beetles what passed out round about the time of the Flood, it gives me the creeps, honest it do. Corlomme! Collectors! There's no limit to what some of them chaps'll read into a scratch or two, specially if they're the sort what only does it in their off-time. I learnt all I wanted to know about amachoor collectors down with Colonel 'Amperson last year in Sussex."

"How was that?" I asked.

"Well, the Colonel's got a fine old 'ouse, a bit of a show-place, and there being a scare of fire 'e got me down for a week to run over all 'is wiring. Very nice gent 'e is, bit of an artist, and always up to some devilry. One morning 'e come to me with a letter in 'is 'and and ses, 'Ere, Silvertop, some perishers from the local Archæowhat'sisname Society want to come and dig over 'Angman's Knoll. They've got an 'unch there ought to be Roman coins buried there."

"You won't let 'em, surely?" I ses.

"Oh, I'll let 'em," 'e ses, 'they might give us a laugh. But I can't 'elp feeling it'd be a thousand pities if they didn't find nothing. You've never done any coining, 'ave you?' 'e asks. 'I've never thought it worth the risk,' I ses. 'No more 'ave I,' ses 'e, 'but it can't be very 'ard. 'Ow about me droring a fat Emperor's dial and

sticking a sort of berry on 'is 'ead and a few bay-leaves round 'im, and us making a mould and getting some copper and lead and knocking off a few 'undred roubles' worth? We can bash 'em about with 'ammers and give 'em a nice chemical bath and then turn 'Angman's Knoll into the Bank of Rome."

"I'm your man, Colonel," I ses.

"We only 'ad three days, but things went so well we made 'arf-a-dozen moulds showing different Emperors looking this way and that. In one droring the Colonel threw in a bunch of warts and in another 'e drew the

their chances, for 'e'd never 'eard tell of any coins being found on the place.

"Then they goes to it. The Colonel and I takes spades too and digs where we know it's all right. Digging 'elped us to keep a straight dial—we'd 'ave burst ourselves if we 'adn't 'ad something to do.

"After a couple of hours 'ard digging they was growing 'ot and despondent when suddenly one of 'em gets a bull's-eye, and then, Corlomme! there was a to-do! Them blokes was so excited they might 'ave won the Irish Sweep. One of the leaders looks at the coin a long

time so as 'e'd know it again and then 'e ses, 'Very interesting, and undoubtedly of the Emperor Such-and-such.' The other leader looks at 'im in astonishment. 'Garn, 'Erbert,' 'e ses, 'you must be off your rocker! It's the Emperor So-and-so, plain as can be.' Well, the two of 'em goes at it 'ammer and tongs and I thought there was a-going to be bloodshed when the Colonel 'e ses, 'I 'ardly likes to contradict, gents, but everything points to the Emperor Tiddley-push'—naming another. 'Oo?' they asks. 'The Emperor Tiddley-push, of course,' ses the Colonel, 'is dial wonderfully straight, 'you know, the one 'oo only reigned thræ weeks because 'e thought so 'ighly of 'is wife's face that when she got 'er nose scratched by a pet bear 'e went and cut 'is throat. You've struck lucky—coins of 'im must be very rare."

"They didn't swallow that?" I asked.

"Swallow it? They lapped it down. And when they come on our five other patterns they was all out to show the Colonel 'e wasn't the only one 'oo knew about coins. There was a little doubt 'ere and there, but they pretty soon placed 'em all. Even the one with the warts, though that worried 'em a bit. But as it 'appened there was one thing they couldn't quite swallow."

"What was that?" I asked.

"A silver penknife, clean as a whistle, what they dug up in the last five minutes from very deep. Even they couldn't say it belonged to old Julius Cæsar, for it 'ad the Colonel's initials on it, clear as day. And after that even they couldn't 'elp wondering!"

ERIC.



... AND STOP WHISTLING 'WHERE IS MY WANDERING BOY?'"

Emperor's missus as well. By the time we'd finished bashing the coins about and dipping 'em in acids they might 'ave come out of the Garden of Eden. You could only see bits of the drorings 'ere and there, just enough to make them poor silly collectors sit up. The night before they came we crept out with a torch and fairly sowed 'Angman's Knoll with 'em, deep down.

"You should 'ave seen the party what rolled up in the morning, all in 'orn-rims and staggering under a load of spades and microscopes and gadgets of all sorts. The Colonel stood 'em drinks all round, and to 'ear 'im a-talking you'd 'ave said grubbing up old dollars was all 'e cared about. But 'e warned 'em very solemn 'e didn't think much of





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"A silver penknife, clean as a whistle, what they dug up in the last five minutes from very deep. Even they couldn't say it belonged to old Julius Cæsar, for it 'ad the Colonel's initials on it, clear as day. And after that even they couldn't 'elp wondering!" ERIC.



"... AND STOP WHISTLING 'WHERE IS MY WANDERING BOY?'"

Emperor's missus as well. By the time we'd finished bashing the coins about and dipping 'em in acids they might 'ave come out of the Garden of Eden. You could only see bits of the drorings 'ere and there, just enough to make them poor silly collectors sit up. The night before they came we crept out with a torch and fairly sowed 'Angman's Knoll with 'em, deep down.

"You should 'ave seen the party what rolled up in the morning, all in 'orn-rims and staggering under a load of spades and microscopes and gadgets of all sorts. The Colonel stood 'em drinks all round, and to 'ear 'im a-talking you'd 'ave said grubbing up old dollars was all 'e cared about. But 'e warned 'em very solemn 'e didn't think much of



"IT OCCURS TO ME, MR. BUTTERWORTH, THAT WE ARE MOST LIKELY THE FIRST MOUNTAINEERING PARTY TO THINK OF THIS METHOD."

### I May Consider Myself.

I AM selling motor-cars,  
I was educated at Cheltenham and Oxford,  
I could neither get into the Navy or the Army, Flying  
made me sick.

I am given a "temporary" job, a very small salary and a  
very small car; I am given a "follow up" file.  
I now "respectfully solicit" and "assure of my best  
attention," I "anticipate requirements" and "file for  
future reference."  
I contact, confuse, confound and am condemned.

I interrogate my Dustman's Uncle,  
I understand he has a Son,  
I am led to believe he "battles" at Lord Bodkin's,  
I understand he overheard,  
I gather the Head Chauffeur told the twenty-third gardener.  
I follow up.

I pass through the Lodge Gates,  
I circumnavigate the Rhododendron Island,  
I enter the Great Fore Court, arrive at the Great Porch,  
pull the enormous bell-chain.  
I am terribly nervous; many miles away I hear an electric-  
bell ring; I wait a decade.

I hear the withdrawing of pre-Yale bolts, am informed his  
Lordship is without or within, I am too terrified to  
know which,  
I await him in the Oak Parlour.

I hear sounds of horses, guns and dogs,  
I hear instructions to gillies and beaters,  
I hear him coming some weeks before he arrives,  
I shake His Lordship warmly by the hand,  
I am told to sit down.

I am wrong in "anticipating his requirements," the fleet  
of Rolls will remain unaltered,  
I am informed that they may require another estate-lorry  
in eight or nine years,

I assure His Lordship I am my Father's Son, one of the  
old Emsworth Blackenhursts,  
I am asked to tea,  
I regretfully refuse and am told it is very nice of me to  
call.  
I depart—with ceremony—with dignity—without order.

I am thirty days older,  
I "follow up" my "follow up file," and telephone.



I talk to the Butler who informs me His Lordship is not within but expresses an opinion that he may be without. I hold the line and hear the blowing of a whistle in the garden.

I hold the line for "forrrrrty-thrrrrrrrrrrrrreeeee" minutes, I am continually asked if I have finished, I constantly reply that I never shall.

I am later informed that His Lordship is neither in the Rose, Dutch, Italian or the Sunk Garden, His Lordship was last seen on the Lower Terrace.

I would like His Lordship to know that I had telephoned.

I am sixty days older, I am reminded by my "follow up" and call again.

I am told His Lordship is in Iceland,

I go round to the battlemented garage where I explain to the Head Chauffeur the weak points in the bribery and corruption laws,

I depart through the Tradesman's Drive which runs through the Deer Park.

I receive an indignant letter from His Lordship's Estate Agent,

I have poked my nose into His Lordship's Garage and Business.

I left His Lordship's Deer Park Gates open with the result that the Deer darted into the Prussian Pergola, which I am informed is bad for (a) the Deer, (b) the Prussian Pergola, (c) our "future happy business relationship."

I neither show the letter to my Sales Director nor do I file same for future reference.

I am unduly depressed.

I am in the Sales Director's Office and am asked if I will take a personal call from Lord Bodkin.

I reply that I will, in the same tone of voice that I use when the dentist asks if I would like the other one out whilst I am there,

I handle the telephone with the deference and respect with which I should handle an electric chair.

I am told it is "LORD BODKIN SPEAKING,"

I move the telephone some three feet further from my ear.

I am told that Her Ladyship saw a Balala Limousine in London and liked it, but HE hated it.

HE thought it cold, cramped and uncomfortable, but Her Ladyship thought it large, likeable and luxurious.

I am asked to order one for her,

I am instructed to fit discs to the wheels,

I am told that a large luggage grid is imperative.

I am told HE imagines that it will cost about two thousand pounds.

I assure him of "my close and personal attention."

I am asked by my Sales Director who that was speaking.

I inform him that it was ONLY Lord Bodkin.

I add that he merely wanted to order a lordly limousine for Her Ladyship.

I become a much more respected man,

I am given a car with a longer bonnet,

I am given a larger salary,

I call myself to the Bar and elevate my arm to the Beerage,

I am informed that I may consider myself on the Permanent Staff.



"... AND NOW I WILL CLOSE. HOPING THIS FINDS YOU AS IT LEAVES US AT PRESENT ..."

## At the Play.

### "THE TWO BOUQUETS" (AMBASSADORS).

THE great success of *The Two Bouquets* at the Ambassadors Theatre is due to the sustained swing with which a deliberately simple tale is carried along. There is plenty of jolly old-time music in the piece, but the songs are not interruptions of the action. They arise naturally out of the plot and carry it a step further each time. In this sense the piece may be called light opera, but the excellent characters only sing when they have something to sing about. That is quite often, for the Victorian household at Twickenham is the centre of great excitement and crossed love affairs. Young *Edward*, the son of the house, is cause of all the trouble. He is not merely unsuitably and so clandestinely, but very cheerfully, married to pretty *Patty Moss* with the awful friends, but he muddles the love affairs of his sister and his cousin.

Mr. GEORGE BENSON makes a great hit as *Edward*. He is full of what he would not fail to call "joy de veever," and his secret marriage does not make him the less ready for a little flirtation in the Gazebo. He sets a note of swift and care-free pleasure-seeking which is rather beyond the temperaments of the four lovers whose misunderstandings make the plot. But everyone is gay and able to rise quickly superior to adverse circumstance. Miss JOYCE BARBOUR as *Ma* is not formidable for long, and Miss BARBOUR makes the most of a part which might so easily have been made a little fuller and richer. Mr. FREDERICK RANALOW as the Victorian father soon drops his dignity and is as merry as anybody, and the young wooers, Mr. BRUCE CARFAX as *Julian Bromley* and Mr. WARREN JENKINS as the more earnest and pathetic *Albert Porter* easily throw to the winds and the rain their chance of winning the Twickenham Cup in the Regatta.

The Regatta, which is the Third Act, is spoilt by rain, but the show is much enriched by dances with umbrellas and tents. Miss GERTRUDE MUSGROVE I do not think I have seen before, but I feel confident I shall often be seeing her in the future, for she was capital

as *Patty Moss*. Her scene with JOYCE BARBOUR, on familiar but never tiresome lines of a concealed surprise for one



A LIGHT-HEARTED LOONY.

Edward Gill . . . MR. GEORGE BENSON.

of the parties to a *tête-à-tête* who is discussing her own case without knowing it, is one of the high spots of the show.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Patty Moss . . . . . MISS GERTRUDE MUSGROVE.  
Mrs. Gill . . . . . MISS JOYCE BARBOUR.

The period is rather the seventies than the nineties and a reference to women bicyclists as a threat of the near future seemed a little premature. But *Edward* belongs to the nineties and Mr. BENSON will make a first-rate *Kipps* or *Mr. Lewisham* if those parts ever come his way. But the piece in its structure is meant to be early-rather than late-Victorian, and the two heroines, Miss ADELAIDE STANLEY and Miss EDITH LEE, have parts as docile young creatures quite ready to be given in marriage which belong to the good books of the first half of the last century. All that matters for the success of an entertainment like this is that the same key shall be maintained throughout. There must not be violent burlesque when temptation offers. The dramatists, ELEANOR and HERBERT FARJEON, show unerring taste and keep their show at just the right pitch of irresponsibility, and Mr. PHILIP GOUGH has designed settings which blend perfectly with the light unforced gaiety which carries the pleasant tangle musically along. D. W.

### "THE ANTE-ROOM" (QUEEN'S).

This play is a quiet, carefully drawn, remorseless study of behaviour. Its people are made to live, but they are lightly sketched, and Miss KATE O'BRIEN's interest here is clearly not with the tricks and humours of individual personality but with the shades of character in their universal incidence. Apart from heroic but motley efforts by some of the cast to echo the speech of Southern Ireland the *Mulqueens* might as easily have been any family living in genteel isolation, and apart from occasional references to Dublin as the Metropolis, the village of Mellick might as well have been found upon the map of Yorkshire or Bavaria or the Alpes Maritimes. The business in hand is to demonstrate the interior of a number of human heads, and few concessions are made to those who would have liked to know more of the exterior existence of an Irish family in 1880. This point is emphasised by the use of only one set throughout the play—a dark country-house drawing-room.

Mrs. *Mulqueen* lies dying upstairs. Mr. *Mulqueen*, a faded little man, is old and pathetically eager to do as he is bidden. Their son *Reggie* has been incapacitated by an illness some years earlier, and hangs hollowly about the house being

kind to the *Nurse* and playing melancholy tunes to himself. Of their two daughters, *Marie-Rose* has married a temperamentally unhappy young man named *de Courcy O'Regan*, while *Agnes* has remained at home, calm unselfish prop of the household and deeply in love with her sister's husband.

Mrs. *Mulqueen's* increasing weakness brings the handsome young doctor, *Curran*, daily to the house, anxious that *Agnes* shall marry him; and it also brings the *O'Regans* on a visit, during which *Agnes* and her brother-in-law discover the intensity of their mutual love. The core of the play is *Agnes's* problem, intensified by the strain of her mother's illness: Shall she go away altogether, promising *O'Regan* with characteristic generosity never to marry anyone else, or shall she settle down with *Curran*, make him happy and develop a groove of tolerable contentment for herself? In the play's best scene *O'Regan* pleads with her to accept a third course and come away with him; but this, out of loyalty to *Marie-Rose*, she refuses, as she also refuses a covert infidelity. Late at night, in the dim drawing-room, they try to thresh the thing out together, *Agnes* horribly torn under her calm but still unyielding, *O'Regan* miserable and passionate. Yet it is he who settles *Agnes's* problem for her, by suicide. And there, I could not help feeling, the play really ends. The last scene, in which *Agnes* returns from a long trip abroad to find *Curran* engaged to *Marie-Rose* and *Reggie* married to the *Nurse*, is more in the nature of an epilogue than a true rounding-off, and almost like the First Act of another play about the *Mulqueens*; for with *O'Regan's* death the tension automatically relaxes.

Miss O'BRIEN's dialogue is delicate and interesting. Resolutely she denies herself the easy laugh, and with an admirable economy sets her characters in focus and lights up their different minds. Her lesser people are far from being convenient padding; how much suggestion of hard-won philosophy she manages to pack into the few short speeches of the *Nurse*!

*Agnes* being mainly a creature of noble resignation, not all of Miss DIANA WYNWARD's talent is fully

exercised by the part; she plays it with superb ease. Miss JESSICA TANDY, with an accent strongly tinged by its

Miss ESMÉ CHURCH's motherly *Nun* is skilfully conveyed; Miss DORICE FORDRED turns the sketch of the *Nurse*

to good account; Mr. CLIFFORD EVANS' *O'Regan* lacks persuasion at first but works up into a sound performance; old *Mulqueen* is more than safe in Mr. MORLAND GRAHAM's hands, but was I right in thinking his accent smacked of somewhere much further up the island? *Doctor Curran*, thanks to Mr. RONALD WARD, is so charming that I feel Mellick to Harley Street can only have been one short hop (did country doctors in the wilds of Ireland really dress and speak with the ease of, say, First Secretaries?); and Mr. DENYS BLAKELOCK cleverly interprets the tragedy and unlooked-for happiness of *Reggie*.

Memories—and even recent ones—of Irish train-services make me very doubtful if *Marie-Rose* in 1883 would have needed a time-table to discover the hour when *Agnes* would come from Dublin. The great daily drama of the arrival of the one train of the day must surely have been unforgettable in Mellick.

But I quibble. This is a play to be inscribed, in spite of the uncertainties of its final scene, high on the list for its firm writing and excellent acting. ERIC.

#### Invitation to Murder.

"Pruning Knife No. X. Ideally constructed, it's the sort of knife that goes to any man's heart."—*Indian Catalogue*.

"Besides, myself and the manager there are two more Englishmen, Mackenzie and Guthrie."—*Extract from Letter to Press*.

Would the manager's name be Jones?

"Exercises encourage the blood stream to carry off excess fat. Here are four easy ones. You can do them sitting down, sewing or reading—any time you think of them.

Lift the chin slowly and deliberately. Did you ever notice a chicken drink? Well, like that—far back. Then let the chin fall forward and down well on to the chest, finally stretching a little forward. You will feel this at the back of the neck. Next, lift the chin well up and let the head fall first left, then right.

Again holding the chin well up, turn it slowly to the left, then to the right. It is good to purse the lips a little and blow in short puffs.

Finally, try to describe a circle with your head, bringing the waist and shoulders into play."—*Sunday Paper*.

And we hope you'll enjoy your book.



SMILES THAT DON'T MEAN A THING.

*Nurse Cunningham* . . . . . Miss DORICE FORDRED.  
*Agnes Mulqueen* . . . . . Miss DIANA WYNWARD.

recent immersion in American, gives a bright portrait of mercurial *Marie-Rose*;



SMILES—FULSOME.

*Marie-Rose de Courcy O'Regan* . Miss JESSICA TANDY.  
*Sir Godfrey Bartlett-Crowe* . Mr. GEORGE BUTLER.



## What the Public Wants; Or, the Newshawk's Vade-Mecum.

### LESSON IV.—RECORDS.

ALTHOUGH, as the list of examples appended below should make amply clear, the number of Records created daily is large and varied, simple and brief instruction should suffice to show the student the manner in which they are so arrived at.

(Would it not be a wise and prudent course for him to buy another copy of this book, in case the one he is using gets thrown away by the housemaid or stolen by the janitor, who also wishes to make a SIX-FIGURE INCOME? We should never forgive ourselves if we allowed one of our students to miss his GREAT OPPORTUNITY through having mislaid his copy of this volume.)

Most Records, naturally, must come under the same category, and it is merely left to the private ingenuity of the editor to contrive variety in their construction. However, there are one or two outstanding, either because of the frequency with which they occur or on account of their value in increasing the CIRCULATION, and of these there is one that is outstanding for both reasons. It usually appears in the following form:—

"2,500,632.

*The Daily Snoop* again breaks the circulation record (previously held by *The Daily Snoop*) with an average net daily sale of over

2,500,632.

This exceeds the figures for last month by 80,748 and for the same time last year by 607,840. These figures include copies given away, copies not published, copies printed but not published, and copies neither printed nor published.

*We certify that is the case.*

(Signed)

GOODBODY, GOODBODY, JENKINS & GOODBODY (Auditors)."

This, printed in two-inch capitals for a week on end and thereafter at intervals of three days until the following month, when it will have to be revised, naturally can account for a good deal of space.

Apart from this favourite standby, other records may be classified into Records—that depend on figures issued by the Home Office, and Miscellaneous. Thus, supposing that during one week the birth-rate drops by 20 per cent., this is a record—it is 20 per cent. lower than the previous week. Again, if it

rises by 20 per cent. it is just as much of a record, because it is 20 per cent. higher than the previous week. As the Home Office issues these figures (and others like them) at very frequent intervals, and as apparently they are a source of great interest to everyone, it is the easiest thing in the world to pick on one almost daily and push it into an odd corner.

Miscellaneous Records are just what the name implies. Often of course they are fictitious, but even where they are true it is surprising how an enterprising editor can enlarge upon them, expand them into two columns and dwell at length upon the supremacy of England in every Branch of Life. (N.B., Foreign records are best left ignored or printed among the classified advertisements where they can't be seen.) There was a very interesting example of this a month or two ago. A railway engine belonging to the L.N.E.R. went faster than any other railway engine went before. Its actual speed was immaterial—something over 100 m.p.h. To most editors that seemed a *bona-fide* record—a British Engine had established the Railway Speed Record and the driver said it behaved very well, and that was that. Perhaps half-a-column. Not so *The Daily Snoop*. The editor of this paper extended the news to two columns by exercising his brain a little and pointed out that this remarkable engine had, by exceeding 100 m.p.h., not only broken the highest railway average speed record but twenty-three other records as well.

These were something as follows:—

The highest speed ever attained on the L.N.E.R.

The highest speed ever attained by an engine painted green.

The highest speed ever attained by a train of three carriages.

The highest speed ever attained on a Tuesday.

The highest speed ever attained on a weekday.

The highest speed ever attained in September.

The highest speed ever attained in 1935, etc., etc., etc., etc.

### OTHER RECORDS.

There is still one other class of Record that we have not yet touched on. This is illustrated by the example given below.

#### Example.

"Mr. James Edward Salter, of Edmonton, N., claims to have the most arduous task in London. He is employed by the L.P.T.B. to fix the advertisements on the sides of their moving staircases. 'For each separate poster,' he said yesterday, 'I have to walk the better part of half-a-mile.'"

These records are of perennial interest and the public seems never to grow tired of them. Here are a few more:—

The Hottest Task in London (in Summer).

The Coldest Task in London (in Winter).

The Wettest Place in the British Isles.

The Oldest Man in the World.

The Heaviest Cat in North London, etc., etc., etc.

#### Another Example.

"Chief Pole-Squatter of Hot Springs, Texas, U.S.A., claims to be the oldest man in the world. He is so old that he cannot remember when he was born."

\* \* \*

"A novel competition is being organised by prominent sportsmen in Paris as to who shall hold the title of 'Mystery Man of Europe.' Sir BASIL ZAHAROFF is a hot favourite, but Mr. MAUNDY GREGORY, Sir CHARLES CRAVEN and TREBITSCH LINCOLN (the Abbot CHAO KUNG) are in the running. Some of the entries are so mysterious that no one has ever heard of them."

### APPENDIX.

#### JOURNALISTIC WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

##### I.—Weights and Measures employed by War Correspondents:—

- 2 incidents = 1 situation
- 2 situations = 1 deadlock
- 2 deadlocks = 1 crisis
- 2 crises = another blow to the prestige of the League.



II.—Weights and Measures as employed by Evening Papers:—

- 2 amazing allegations = 1 startling disclosure  
 2 startling disclosures = 1 dramatic revelation  
 2 dramatic revelations = 1 sensation  
 2 sensations = 1 Late Extra and repeated ad. lib.

III.—Graduated List of Fanciful Titles for leader of Peasant Revolt in Bessarabia:—

1. The Roumanian Robin Hood.
2. The Roumanian RASPUTIN.
3. The Colonel LAWRENCE of Roumania.
4. Sir BASIL ZAHAROFF in Roumania?
5. TREBITSCH LINCOLN in Roumania?

IV.—Weights and Measures as applied to weather:—

(a) Fine Weather—

- 2 bright intervals = 1 fine day  
 2 fine days = 1 ridge of high pressure  
 2 ridges of high pressure = 1 heat wave  
 1 heatwave = a photograph of the Polar bears in the Zoo  
 1 heatwave = an egg fried on the pavement in Fleet Street.

(b) Wet Weather—

- 2 Light drizzles = 1 sharp shower  
 2 sharp showers = 1 cloudburst  
 2 cloudbursts = 1 torrential downpour  
 2 torrential downpours = 1 storm of tropical violence  
 2 storms of tropical violence = £100,000 worth of damage in 24 hours

(c) Hailstones, sizes of, in Ljubljana only:—

- 2 pigeons' eggs = 1 walnut  
 2 walnuts = 1 golf ball  
 2 golf balls = windows and green-houses shattered, cattle beaten into pulp and a boy on a bicycle severely injured.

V.—Weights and Measures as applied to Politicians:—

- 2 meetings = 1 conference  
 2 conferences = 1 congress  
 2 congresses = 1 convention  
 2 conventions = 1 front  
 2 fronts = 1 deputation of delegates  
 2 deputations of delegates = 1 Committee of Five  
 2 Committees of Five = 1 Committee of Thirteen  
 2 Committees of Thirteen = adjourned until 1938.

VI.—American Weights and Measures:—

- 2 probes = 1 quiz  
 2 quizzes = 1 clean-up  
 2 clean-ups = 1 purity campaign  
 2 purity campaigns = Soak the Rich!

Why We Go Mad.

"In the paragraph under the cross-heading 'Why We Go Slow,' Anglo-French-British entente should, of course, read 'Anglo-French-German-British entente.'"

Correction in Provincial Paper.



"DO YOU THINK YOU COULD RECOMMEND A NICE QUIET MOUNT FOR MY YOUNG SISTER?"

Harry.

BRIGHTON will never be the same again; for it will be silent. The Great Little Man has gone, and with him his laugh. Never again, somewhere on the ground-floor of his hotel, in the entrance-hall, in the lounge, in the bar or in the dining-room, shall we suddenly hear that laugh, not so much a laugh as a crow or the cry of a pheasant, and remark "Harry's over there." Hotel proprietors do not as a rule laugh, even silently; but Harry was different; Harry had a charter, and it was understood that as he moved among his guests, who were either his friends before they arrived

in Brighton, or who became his friends immediately after, he should, if so disposed, laugh. Hotel proprietors, as a matter of fact, do not mix with their guests at all, passing, perfectly dressed, with the neatest of feet and the comeliest of hands and the baldest of heads, among them, and offering a word to each; but Harry was different, Harry had a charter. His compliments to women, his flatteries to men, could be outrageous, but they were accepted: Harry had a charter. And now his hand-shake will rock us no more, and Brighton will never be the same again.

E. V. L.



THE LINER THAT SUDDENLY DECIDED SHE REALLY WOULD MAKE A DASH FOR THE FASTEST RECORD EVER.

### Aids to Invective.

STRONG language has a way of becoming monotonous from the repetition of overworked nouns and epithets. In earlier days the practice of "dodging a curse" by a condensed version of a blasphemous or unseemly phrase had a long vogue which still lingers on in such expletives as "drat," but modern frankness has largely removed the desire to spare the feelings of the sensitive. As it has been said, "the very infant in his pram indulges in the frequent damn." Swearing seems ineradicable, though some great men have managed to dispense with it altogether—Lord BALFOUR, for instance, is alleged to have never used any expression of annoyance stronger than "Bother!" But signs are not wanting of a reaction against promiscuous profanity. If this be so it may be worth while to consider the possibility of introducing substitutes for swear-words which would combine the maximum of explosiveness with the minimum of offence. This is not a new

idea. Many years ago there was a gentleman who, when deeply moved, found relief in ejaculating "Northumberland, Cumberland and Durham!" And there is the story of another ingenious expert in ornamental execration who found comfort in repeating the name of the firm: "Godfrey, Daniel, Blast and Furnace Company, Limited."

DANIEL O'CONNELL, whose description of DISRAELI as "the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief" remains perhaps the most lacerating example on record of political invective, illustrated on another occasion the triumphant success with which deliberately misused terminology could be turned to account in a duel of abuse. There are many versions of his historic encounter with the Dublin fish-wife, but that given by the late Lord SUMNER, in his "Life of the Liberator," is the most picturesque. According to him the fish-wife was finally knocked out by being described not only as a "whisky-drinking parallelogram," but as a "porter-swiping similitude of the bisection of a vortex."

Nicknames can be on occasion deadly weapons of offence. Many years ago in Edinburgh there was a citizen of some note who had strongly-marked features and a somewhat livid complexion, which led to his being rechristened "Putrid Napoleon." But some real names are almost as hard to live down, as, for example, that of the American Senator, LORENZO DE MEDICI SWET. To return to the enlargement of the vocabulary of invective by the use of "terminological inexactitudes," some fruitful hints may be found in the names of birds. Thus, if one were engaged in an altercation with a ginger-haired miller, it would be correct, though not perhaps safe, to address him as a "mealy redpoll." Persons of limited intelligence could be suitably described as "dotterels"—birds which in SKELTON's famous list are expressly called foolish. Other bird-names that commend themselves in this context are "Ruddy shelduck," "Buffel-headed duck," "Pratincole," "Glaucus gull," "Squacco heron" and "Bar-tailed godwit."

C. L. G.





"GRANNY, I'M SO TIRED OF NOT PULLING THE CAT'S TAIL."

### Care Taken.

NOBODY will buy Scaines House.  
 It has been up for sale ten years or more.  
 There is a notice at the wrought-iron gates,  
 Another on the door.  
 The villagers of Cross-in-Hand  
 They say the property is good;  
 There is no tax upon the land,  
 No reason why the long rooms should  
 Have lain ten years unkempt and cold  
 If it were not for stories told:  
 How once the two stone cranes were seen  
 To leave the terrace where they stood  
 And flap away across the wood;  
 How this and that poor ghost has been

Surprised upon the kitchen stair;  
 How sometimes, in the evening, smoke  
 Will tippie from the chimney-pots,  
 Though fire was never kindled there.  
 And then the caretaker knows lots  
 Of other tales about the place:  
 How once a fir-cone struck her face  
 When she was getting into bed,  
 And how a light danced all one night  
 Among the rafters overhead.  
 The caretaker is very wise.  
 In comfort will her bones grow old,  
 For certainly until she dies  
 The House of Scaines will not be sold.



"WOULD YOU LIKE A NOVELTY, SIR?"  
 "SURE! FETCH ME A DECENT DRINK."



### Magic in London.

I GATHER that thaumaturgy, like many another honest profession, is being unkindly hit by the films. It seems sad to me that this should be so. From the airy production of eggs and handkerchiefs to the solemn and businesslike decapitation of bodies, I like all the acts of the illusionist. There is no fixed shrine of magic in London to-day, so I went to the Alhambra to see DANTE, who "sailed with his company for New York on the 15th of June, 1927, and is now in the ninth year of his fourth World Tour," having visited all the principal

cities of the habitable globe and perhaps more, since I see Mukden, Moscow, Madrid and Peking are included in the grand itinerary. He might well have added to himself Ulysses for his first and Virgil for his middle name. But he has preferred to keep the plain title, DANTE, and to call his "mystery spectacle" quite modestly Sim-Sala-Bim.

No words of mine could describe it better. It comprises every kind of legerdemain, every deft demonstration (as the programme puts it) of deceptive dexterity, every sort of mechanical bewilderment involving secret mirrors and black velvet back-cloths and magical tea-cases, the haunt of brave men and fair women, either whole or in halves.

Rings, ropes, bullets, cards, transposition, levitation, the conjuring up of strange spirits, the production of unlimited beer—you can see them all at the Alhambra.

There is not much "patter," for DANTE seems to prefer the flicker of an eyelid to many words, and I was sorry for this, for I like patter. But even for

those who have sat for some years of their youth under MASKELYNE, it is a great show. There are said to be twelve tons of luggage when DANTE goes on tour. It would have pleased me to see the boxes going through, say, the Czecho-Slovakian Customs. But would there be anything to see? Would they not all be found empty, and followed by DANTE and his troupe (muttering "Rien") without passports, and dissolved into tenuous air?

EVOE.

### Thank Heaven for the Navy.

"An Englishman who has an aviary of over 400 birds near Malaga was allowed to travel to Gibraltar and back in a British destroyer to renew his supply of birdseed."

Sunday Paper.

### Believe It or Not.

"The beautiful Mrs. —, pale, with big brown eyes, and wearing her own eyebrows, is accompanying her husband on his short visit here."—Social Gossip.

"Barking firemen were yesterday instructed to go to the local Isolation Hospital."—Daily Paper.

Hydrophobia is so catching.

## Our Booking-Office.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

### The Imperial Bolshevik.

To a Russian of the Revolution, Tsar PETER's zest for smashing and rebuilding makes a direct appeal. This monarch, who executed mutineers wholesale and himself tightened the rack for a prostrate enemy, was no less competent in wielding hammer and sickle, to build a fleet or clear a site for a city. With his own royal hands he coerced his boyars and their ladies when they were slow to abandon mediævalism and adopt the ways of light. They must learn to wear wigs, drink coffee and dance a minuet or fail at their peril. ALEXEI TOLSTOI in *Peter the Great* (GOLLANCZ, 16/-) depicts the early manhood of a king who is a monster, but a monster crudely alive with a set purpose to drive his mulish people towards civilisation through whatever sloughs of pain and upheaval. This account of his career is only moderately gruesome with the insane freaks and cruelties that multiplied in his later years, but the condition of the Russia of his period is uncomfortably reflected in the inconsequence and incompleteness of the episodes related, in the perpetual arrival and disappearance of fresh characters bearing names barbarous in English ears, and in the frequent loss of any thread of narrative holding the theme together.

### Mystery in the Lake District.

High up in the pedigree of thrillers, but as vivid as ever—with his supremacy acknowledged by no less magisterial an authority than the late Provost of Eton—SHERIDAN LE FANU's *Uncle Silas* is still paternal fiend, if I may so theologically express myself, of all wicked uncles and other malignly-interested relatives. And comparing him with the sinister hero of Mr. HUGH WALPOLE's new novel—itsself a pendant, though not a sequel, to *Captain Nicholas*—I realise how much is lost in this particular vein by comparative haste and hustle. *A Prayer for My Son* (MACMILLAN, 7/6)—not perhaps a happy title—sets out to establish an atmosphere of horror round *Rose Clennell*, her illegitimate son *John*, *John's* tweedy and dutiful *Aunt Janet*, and *Michael Brighthouse* his tutor. It emanates, this atmosphere, from *Colonel Fawcus*, *John's* grandfather, who adopted the fatherless *John* on condition that his mother should not see him and then suddenly repented and asked her to his eerie house near Keswick. A little more all-round solicitude and the novelist, you feel, might have brought off his impression. As it is the book is chiefly remarkable for *Aunt Janet* and *Rackstraw*, an exparson, both of whom strike me as enjoying independent lives apart from the exigencies of the plot.



"YES, WE USUALLY GET A STRONG WIND UP HERE."

### Ellis Bell under the Microscope.

Emphasis on the romantic tradition to which all the BRONTËS belonged—a tradition which, plus heredity and circumstances, sufficiently, perhaps, accounts for the trend of their genius—is waning in favour of pseudo-mystical and pathological conjecture. Yet the whole history of poetic imagination goes to show how casual is its affinity with contemplation and how slight its link with the usually humdrum lives of its exponents. Unlike Miss ROMER WILSON, whose EMILY, if I remember rightly, sold her soul to the devil, Miss VIRGINIA MOORE speaks of a divine ecstasy in 1837, closely followed by a devastating passion, most probably for a woman. The latter catastrophe, it is suggested, is embodied in the experiences and sentiments of *Heathcliff* of *Wuthering Heights*. Evidence for and against these theories is sifted with candour and care, close scrutiny of published and unpublished MSS. in the British Museum revealing much that is beautiful and



interesting. But the real strength and charm of *The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë* (RICH AND COWAN, 18/-) lies in its rich accumulation of concrete detail and out-of-the-way literary fragments—their interpretation commands less credit.

### Between Two Stools.

An uncommonly good "mixer" is needed to shake together post-War politics and romance into a readable novel. Nobody can deny that Mr. GEORGE SLOCOMBE has first-hand knowledge of Europe and its political underworld. Moreover, the title of *Men In Arms* (HEINEMANN, 7/6), which he has given to his tale of rebellion, gun-running, and the sinister intrigues of great armament trusts, proves that Mr. SLOCOMBE, as befits a well-known journalist, has a keen eye for the topical. Nevertheless these gifts alone do not make a novelist. There is still needed the gift of story-telling and the ability to turn creatures of the imagination into living men and women. This is where Mr. SLOCOMBE fails. He falls between the two stools of fact and fiction. I cannot believe in the real existence of his characters—least of all of the beautiful *Lydia Karine*—while at the same time I admire the skill and sureness of touch with which he describes the political background to their unreal lives. I hope Mr. SLOCOMBE will in future remain within that realm of fact which, as he has already shown very clearly in his autobiography, can be far more entertaining and even thrilling than the most exaggerated fiction.

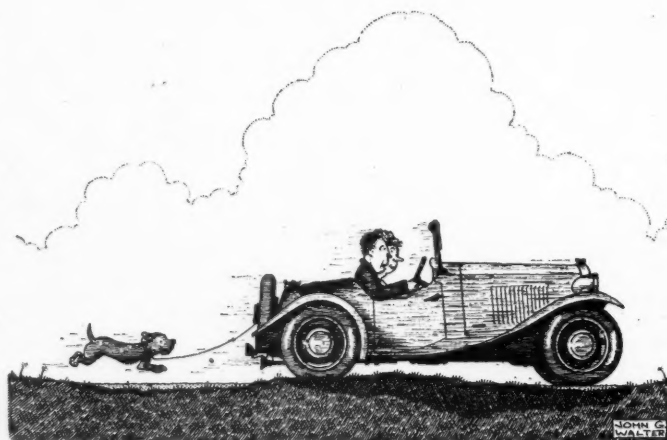
### Ballyhoo Hero.

Very craftily Mr. HILLEL BERNSTEIN inserts the sharp remorseless pin of satire into the grotesque bubbles which form the body-cells of the totalitarian state. It would be difficult to perform this operation with more dexterity than he shows in *Choose a Bright Morning* (GOLLANCZ, 6/-), a political fantasy based on the stern but ridiculous realities of tongue-in-cheek ideology, reinforced by ruthless discipline and the billion horse-power of unified propaganda. Mr. BERNSTEIN takes the case of an American millionaire who, in all admiration, visits the State of Bidlo to present it with a statue of its dictator; is double-crossed by another millionaire (a member of the Lumberjacks, the world's most exclusive club, accessible only to those democrats accorded the supreme honour of chopping wood in company with deposed royalty), sent to a concentration-camp and beaten as a Communist, a bourgeois, a landlord, a Catholic, a pacifist, a Christian, a foreigner, and a war veteran; endeavours to grasp the principles of the arrangement by which Bidlo and her nearest rival lend each other money for buying munitions

for fighting each other, and learns that dictatorships are nothing else but publicity agents' heavens. This is a clever and witty book, which will surely tickle your palate as well as make you laugh; do not therefore be put off by the coverful of ecstatic celebrities who happened to read it in proof.

### In and Out of Court.

*Perry on Tennis* (HUTCHINSON, 3/6)—a pleasantly straightforward title with no nonsense about it—is a book which successfully avoids the pitfalls that lie in wait for those who write about a game at which they excel. Blending personal reminiscence with sound instruction Mr. FRED J. PERRY, the reigning champion, is both interesting in his accounts of actual play and very helpful in his advice to those who think that a lawn-tennis ball is made to be hit and not merely patted. Generous tributes are paid to many opponents from all parts of the world, and if anyone still exists who believes that the road to victory is easy and strewn with roses Mr. PERRY will convince them of their folly. The future of the game has also received his attention, and as regards the increasing difficulties which players of championship class have to meet he writes with sense and discretion. Gracefully prefaced by Mr. H. W. AUSTIN and liberally supplied with illustrations this modest little book will be warmly welcomed.



"I MAKE A POINT OF TAKING THE DOG OUT FOR A RUN EVERY DAY; IT'S THE ONLY EXERCISE I GET."

### Vengeance.

NORMAN FORREST is, we are informed, the pseudonym "of one who is himself a publisher and has long been familiar with the ways of authors." So, although *Death Took a Publisher* (HARRAP, 7/6) is not entirely successful as a thriller, it is at any rate amusing and informing about those who write books and those who publish them. I have no complaint to lodge against the ingenious device by which the senior partner of *Royle and Gray, Ltd.*, was killed, indeed Mr. FORREST shows himself thoroughly expert in contriving clever crimes. I should, however, have derived greater enjoyment from his story if he had given me more opportunities to solve the problems which he propounds. But his investigators are unaffected people, and I understand that presently we shall be given the pleasure of meeting them again.

### Our Consolation Prize.

"At the Olympic Games at Berlin yesterday Great Britain won the double skulls title."—*News Item.*

"Drake stopped here after one of his victories over Van Tromp."—*News Article.*

You remember how he singed the Dutch Admiral's broom?